

INDEX

(e- Scan 16-31Jan 2022)

S No	Rank & Name	Country	Page(s)
1.	Brig RK Bhutani (Retd)	CHINA	2-3
2.	Cdr Naveen Pandita	IOR (MARITIME)	3-4
3.	Col Siddhartha Sharma	WEST ASIA	4-6
4.	Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)	UNITED STATES	6-7
5.	Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)	BALLISTIC MISSILE	7
6.	Col DM Govil	PAKISTAN & BANGLADESH	7-12
7.	Col DM Govil	SRI LANKA/ MYANMAR & MALDIVES	12-14
8.	Col Siddhartha Sharma	IRAN & AFGHANISTAN	14-16
9.	Gp Capt Puneet Bhalla	ASEAN	16-17
10.	Air Cmde T Chand (Retd)	EURASIA	18-20

ENVIRONMENT SCAN: 16-31 JAN 2022

CHINA (Geo-Strat, Geo-Politics & Geo-Economics)

China Sends 39 Warplanes Toward Taiwan, Largest in New Year

(<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/china-sends-39-warplanes-toward-taiwan-largest-in-new-year/articleshow/89084576.cms>)

China flew 39 warplanes toward Taiwan on 23 January night in its largest such sortie of the new year - the formation included 24 J-16 fighter jets and 10 J-10 jets, among other support aircraft and electronic warfare aircraft.

Comments. China is continuing with a pattern of intruding Taiwan's air space and its intensity is increasing gradually. Whereas Taiwan is responding by scrambling its own jets and tracking the People's Liberation Army planes on its air defense radar systems. The largest sortie was 56 warplanes on a single day last October.

Beijing opposes any action that would identify Taiwan as a sovereign state and has used diplomatic and military means to isolate and intimidate Taiwan.

President Xi Jinping has set a new goal to turn the PLA into a modern military force by 2027, by which time, China aims to build an army on par with that of the US. If realized, the PLA's 2027 modernization goals could provide Beijing with more credible military options in a Taiwan contingency. However, Beijing may not necessarily wait till 2027 to take military action against Taiwan if the coercion can deliver the results without fighting. With the US attention drawn toward Russian action against Ukraine, China is likely to strengthen its military presence in Indo-Pacific.

In an editorial published in China's Global Times, Chinese ambassador to the US, Qin Gang said, "If, you know the Taiwanese authorities, emboldened by the US, you know, keep going down the road for independence, it most likely will involve China and the United States, the two big countries, in the military conflict." Thus, the day is not far when China will have an open military confrontation with the US.

China Vows to 'Show No Mercy' in Battle Against Big Tech Influence, Corruption

(<https://www.bloombergquint.com/global-economics/china-vows-to-curb-technology-firms-influence-on-governments>)

In a sweeping communique following the plenary session of the Chinese Communist Party's top anti-graft group, the government said it would break the ties between money and power, and tackle corruption in a range of industries. It also pledged to target political factions and interest groups within the party, the official Xinhua News Agency reported on 20 January.

Comments. Shortly after taking office in 2012, Xi had promised the public to eradicate corruption. Xi launched an anti-corruption campaign of unprecedented scale led by his closest associate, Wang Qishan. The effort was dubbed the "*tigers and flies*" campaign since it promised to entrap corrupt officials whether they were mere low-level "flies" or high-ranking "tigers." From 2012-2017, more than 900,000 party members had been disciplined and 42,000 expelled and prosecuted in criminal courts. Among those had been 170 high-level "tigers," including dozens of high-ranking military officers, 18 sitting or

former members of the 150-person Central Committee, and even former members of the Standing Committee.

With a view to secure third term in the office, Xi Jinping had carried out a regulatory onslaught that upended industries from e-commerce to education and ride-hailing last year. Reportedly, it erased more than \$1 trillion of market value last year. It appears that the continued action would serve as a warning for Communist Party officials to keep their heads down ahead of a once-in-five-year meeting later this year, at which Xi's expected to secure a third term in office.

As a result, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. took a hit on next day on 21 January, falling 3.4% in Hong Kong after China's Central Television network aired a five-part documentary series, "Zero Tolerance," to coincide with the anti-graft meeting.

Another CCTV episode revealed how Sun Lijun, former vice public security minister, received bribes worth \$14 million in small seafood boxes. He also faces charges of stock manipulation and gun possession. Earlier this month, the anti-graft body placed the chairman of China Life Insurance Co. under investigation in a surprise move. A nationwide anti-corruption crackdown focusing on financial institutions and regulators has netted more than 20 officials since its start in October as authorities step up scrutiny of the nation's \$54 trillion financial system.

IOR & SCS (MARITIME)

German Warship Docks in Mumbai.

(https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/german-warship-docks-in-mumbai-welcomed-by-indian-navy-envoy-stresses-on-free-searoutes/articleshow/89041012.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

The German Warship F123 Brandenburg class frigate docked in Mumbai post conduct of passing exercise with the Indian Navy. Its mandate prior to docking at Mumbai was to provide support to international maritime security missions like 'Operation Sea Guardian' in the Mediterranean Sea and 'Atlanta' in the Arabian Sea. The ship helped enforce the UN administered arms embargo against Democratic People's Republic of Korea prior to its journey through the South China Sea. It also participated in joint Naval exercises with Australia and Japan.

Comments. The Indo-Pacific region is of utmost importance with emphasis on free maritime routes. The warship arrival indicates strong defence ties between the two nations, and it was given a warm welcome at Mumbai by an Indian Navy band at a ceremony. This only goes to prove the reliance of the German Navy on India as a partner and acknowledgement of a robust ship repair and building facilities.

Iran, China and Russia Hold Naval Drills in North Indian Ocean.

(https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-china-and-russia-hold-naval-drills-in-north-indian-ocean/articleshow/89034655.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

Iran, China and Russia held their third joint Naval drills in the northern Indian Ocean on 21 Jan 22. Navies from Iran's Armed Forces and Revolutionary Guards are taking part in the "2022 Marine Security Belt" exercise over an area of 17,000 sq km. The drills included

various tactical exercises such as rescuing a burning vessel, releasing a hijacked vessel, and shooting at air targets at night.

Comments. The three countries started joint Naval drills in 2019 in the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman. The purpose of this drill was to strengthen security and its foundations in the region, and to expand multilateral cooperation between the three countries to jointly support world peace, maritime security and create a maritime community with a common future. These drills for India imply stronger ties interoperability between the nations and China's outreach to Russia and Iran. The growing influence and presence of PLA Navy in the western Arabian sea is being monitored with a mammoth surveillance effort of the Indian Navy.

US Combat Jet Crashes in South China Sea Exercise/ Dual Carrier Exercise.

(https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-combat-jet-crashes-in-south-china-sea-exercise-7-hurt/articleshow/89109626.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

A US Navy F35C Lightning II combat jet conducting exercises in the South China Sea crashed while trying to land on the deck of an American aircraft carrier, injuring seven sailors. The pilot ejected during the "landing mishap on deck" of the USS Carl Vinson, pilot was recovered by a military helicopter.

Comments. The combat jet exercises were undertaken after China pressing territorial claims in the South China Sea and increasing pressure on Taiwan. Two American carrier strike groups Carl Vinson and Abraham Lincoln with more than 14,000 sailors and marines are conducting exercises in the South China Sea, demonstrating the "US Indo-Pacific Command Joint Force's ability to deliver a powerful maritime force. The US and its allies have stepped up exercises in the region under the umbrella of freedom of navigation operations. Post Carl Vinson and Abraham Lincoln strike groups began their dual carrier operations, China flew 39 warplanes toward Taiwan in its largest such formation of aircraft into the Taiwan ADIZ in show of their might over South China Sea.

WEST ASIA

Turkey Balancing Act on Ukraine Crisis

(*Why is Turkey trying to mediate the Ukraine-Russia crisis? | News | Al Jazeera n.d.*)

Turkey is hoping to help defuse tensions between its NATO allies and Russia over the Ukraine crisis, with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expected to meet his counterparts on both sides of the conflict in the coming weeks.

Comments. This is a big balancing act which Turkey has to play. Turkey has the second largest army in NATO and thus principally aligned to the west. Turkey also exports arms to Ukraine, however, Turkey is also aligned with Russia in many ways. The Russian tourists provide foreign currency and Russian gas provides much relief particularly in winters. Turkey aligned with NATO has not recognized Russia annexation of Crimea as legal, however, it has not imposed NATO sponsored sanctions on Russia. Further similar situation would be not in interest of Turkish economy and security.

Turkey - UAE Ties Improving

(Turkey signs \$5bn swap deal with UAE, boosting foreign reserves | Financial Markets News | Al Jazeera n.d.)

(Turkey will send 3,250 security forces to Qatar World Cup | Qatar 2022 News | Al Jazeera n.d.)

Turkey signed a \$4.9 billion currency swap agreement with the United Arab Emirates, boosting dwindling foreign-exchange reserves depleted by the country's financial turmoil. Turkey will also send 3,250 security officers to Qatar for the football World Cup that starts in November this year.

Comments. After a decade of frosty relations with UAE, Turkey is engaging again. The crumbling economy forces Turkey to engage with the UAE and better relations with Turkey opens up doors for UAE for arms, in particular drones from Turkey. It has to be noticed that foes can be aligned once interests demand.

Israeli President Visits UAE

"Israeli President Meets UAE Crown Prince Bin Zayed." <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/middle-east/israeli-president-meets-uae-crown-prince-bin-zayed-articleshow.html> (January 31, 2022).

Israel's figurehead president *Isaac Herzog* met *Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan* on 30 Jan 22 on the first official visit to the United Arab Emirates by the country's head of state, the latest sign of deepening ties between the two nations. The UAE and Israel normalized relations in the fall of 2020, part of a series of U.S.-brokered diplomatic deals between Israel and Arab states that had long avoided formal relations with Israel over its decades-old conflict with the Palestinians.

Comments. Improvement or relations between Israel and Islamic nations is a proof of changing world order where improving relations towards making stronger economies is preceding religion based restrictions. Though there is still a long way before ties can be trusted upon due to historical differences based on ideologies. This is a welcome move for India which has cordial relations with both the countries and can now work with both without considering bilateral ties with other.

Houthi Rebels Target UAE

(What is behind the Houthi attacks in the UAE? | Houthis News | Al Jazeera n.d.)

A drone attack on 17 Jan 22 by Houthi rebels from Yemen on Abu Dhabi airport killed three UAE citizens. The attack dented UAE reputation as a safe haven for tourists and foreign offices. The attack also cast shadows on the organization of FIFA world cup scheduled in November this year at Abu Dhabi. The UAE is a member of the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis, and officially backing Yemen's government. UAE had over the years reduced its major involvement in the conflict and had stayed safe from Houthi attacks which were mostly focused on Saudi Arabia. However, recently the Giants Brigade of UAE had moved along with Yemeni forces and forced Houthis to vacate Shabwah, an important city in Yemen. The brigade is now pushing Houthis in Marib. The attack of Houthi's on 17 was followed by a massive air strike by Saudi's on Houthi strongholds. Houthi's have issued statements for further attacks on both UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Comments. The strike by Houthi's on UAE is possibly a retaliatory strike on UAE conveying the message of staying away. Some analysts also see this as a tactic by Iran

who backs the Yemeni rebels to attack UAE so that UAE goes soft on imposing sanctions as a part of JCPOA fallout. However, considering the reputation and importance of FIFA world cup, it is anticipated that UAE would reduce the hard stance it has been following over the past few months.

ISIS Attack a Syrian Prison to Free Comrades

*(ISIS Fighters Attack Syria Prison to Free Fellow Jihadists - The New York Times n.d.)
(400 ISIS Fighters Missing After Syrian Prison Jailbreak n.d.)*

Fighters from the Islamic State attacked a prison in northeast Syria in an attempt to free thousands of their comrades in one of the boldest assaults by the terrorist group since the fall of its so-called caliphate three years ago. The attack began on evening of 20 Jan 22 with explosion of two car bombs on prison wall holding 3000 ISIL prisoners. At the same time another 200 ISIL members cut off routes to the prison. This set off deadly clashes with the US backed Kurdish militia that controls the area. Simultaneously, across the border in Iraq, Islamic State fighters launched one of the deadliest attacks in months there on 21 Jan 22 morning, killing 11 Iraqi security force members. The fight continued for six days. Reports of casualties are conflicting but approx 300 ISIL, 150 Guards and security forces dead. 400 prisoners are said to be missing.

Comments. The twin attacks highlighted the fragile security that persists in territories once ruled by the Islamic State, and showed that the jihadists, while greatly weakened, can still cause havoc. The reduction of US forces from the area has further emboldened the ISIL. Iraq and Syria have a long way ahead before any form of stability reaches the country. India should also be cautious of certain elements being reminded to follow similar path. In India, Maoists have followed similar tactics of attacking jails and freeing comrades in the past.

UNITED STATES

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/ukraine-will-tensions-with-russia-dilute-the-us-focus-on-indo-pacific-china-101643346242881.html>

Ukraine: Will tensions with Russia dilute the US focus on Indo-Pacific, China?

Comments. There appears to be a situation of stalemate in Ukraine. Both opposing sides, ie US/NATO and Russia are carrying out shadow fighting by keeping Ukraine at the focal point. Russia confirms that it will not start the war, the US on the other hand believes that by mid-Feb Russia will attack. This development and shadow boxing at Ukraine expense has caused much frustration in Ukraine which while being egged to fight the Russian will have minimal direct involvement of United States and NATO members. Their help is meagre and laughable in some cases. For example, Germany reportedly is contributing assistance with 5000 helmets. Biden on the other hand has made it clear that US will not deploy forces for the defence of Ukraine as it is not a NATO member and US is not obliged to defend Ukraine. NATO response team has 30000- 40000 troops but, they too from all account may not join in the direct fight which Ukraine will have to fight Russia alone with little help from the West. Considering the pros and con, Ukraine leadership, President Volodymyr Zelensky now wants to play it down and does not want war with Russia and while he agrees with US President that Ukraine is facing Russian threat but, also believes that war is avoidable.

From all account, it appears that the United States may shift its focus to Russia while larger strategic challenge of China still looms large. The Diversion of U.S. geopolitical

attention from Indo-Pacific to Europe could have serious consequences. China will get a chance to push forward its expansionist policy which may even turn ominous for Taiwan and India China LAC. The QUAD which has become a deterring force in the region could also lose its impact to the detriment of confidence of the Asian nation which then could then willy-nilly turn towards to China and acquiesce to its just unjust demands. US could also lose its credibility and influence in competition with China.

By applying more sanctions on Russia, United States is actually pushing Russia closer to China. Today, it is mainly China, tomorrow the Challenge would be Russia-China combine. At this stage, strategically Asia is far more important than Europe. US policy should be to create a wedge between Russia and China than bring them closer by sanctions and threat of war.

It is fact that during President Obama's presidency, US deeper engagement in the Middle East had lost ground to China in Asia. Its pivot Asia remained a paper exercise and China with lack of world attention on it, could militarise the South China Sea. It is hoped that situation does not get repeated again with misplaced focus of the United States.

BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE

<https://www.defensenews.com/land/2022/01/21/thaad-in-first-operational-use-destroys-midrange-ballistic-missile-in-houthi-attack/>

THAAD, in first operational use, destroys midrange ballistic missile in Houthi attack.

Comments. In its first operational success, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) made by Lockheed Martin, has successfully intercepted the midrange ballistic missiles launched allegedly by the Houthi rebels to attack an Emirati oil facility near Al-Dhafra Air Base, in UAE. This base hosts US and French forces. In attack, Houthi used allegedly Iran made cruise missiles, ballistic missiles and drones. The U.S. has deployed THAAD throughout the world, including to Guam, Israel, South Korea and Japan. The THAAD system is designed to defend targets at ranges of 150 – 200 km. Unlike other missile defence systems, THAAD can intercept targets within (endo-atmospheric) and outside (exo-atmospheric) the atmosphere. India was offered THAAD by the United States in an effort to discourage purchase of S400 missile units from Russia but, India preferred to buy S 400 primarily because S 400 is capable of intercepting all known air threats unlike THAAD which is meant only against the ballistic missile threats. Therefore, India would have required another system like Patriot to take on other multifarious threats this would have been a very expensive compared to the S400 which considered a more versatile in performance and can engage all known threats.

The UAE attack once again proves that fool proof defence is never possible especially against the multifarious threats and mass raids. The nation must have adequate retaliatory force to deter such attacks.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan Aiding Chinese Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/pakistan-aiding-chinese-repression-of-uyghurs-in-xinjiang-report/articleshow/89054392.cms>

Pakistan has never shied away from denouncing other nations for atrocities against Muslim communities however the country itself has remained noncommittal on the issue of violation of Uyghur human rights in Xinjiang.

Comments. The international community has been quite vocal about the treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. China's economic rise and growing presence in Pakistan due to its investment specifically in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has given Beijing an unprecedented scope to take off 'Transnational Repression' in the country including violation of human rights and persecution of Uyghur minorities in Xinjiang region. Chinese authorities had included Pakistan on the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XAR) list of 26 blacklisted countries. The blacklisting means those with contacts with anyone or visited or have family ties or any communication in these blacklisted countries are not to be trusted and will remain under the radar of XAR authorities. Notably, for years Pakistani nationals and Uyghurs have forged marriages as there has been trans-border commerce involved between the two nations across the Karakoram Highway.

To Attract Indians to Kartapur Sahib, Pakistan to Celebrate Spring Festival

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/to-attract-indians-to-kartapur-sahib-pakistan-to-celebrate-spring-festival/articleshow/89048375.cms>

In order to attract devotees from India to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, the Pakistani government has decided to celebrate 'Jashan-e-Baharan' (Basant), marking the arrival of the spring season. While expressing concern over the significant decline in the number of devotees (73 devotees against 200 devotees) visiting Kartarpur Sahib everyday post reopening of the corridor, CEO of its project management unit, Muhammad Latif, said they would celebrate 'Jaishan-e-Baharan' or the spring festival. The CEO attributed rapid spread of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus behind the decline in the number of devotees. The CEO said despite economic stagnation, the Pakistani government is spending a huge amount on the maintenance of the Kartarpur Corridor, for which it has specially created separate department.

Comments. An Agreement between India and Pakistan for the facilitation of pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Pakistan, was signed on 24 October 2019. The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement, inter alia, provides for visa-free travel of Indian pilgrims as well as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, from India to the holy Gurudwara in Pakistan on a daily basis, throughout the year. Steps must be taken to facilitate travel between the two countries to promote the bilateral ties.

India Ready to Ship Wheat to Afghanistan via Pakistan early February

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-ready-to-ship-wheat-to-afghanistan-via-pakistan-early-feb/articleshow/89065503.cms>

India and Pakistan have finally arrived at an agreement to transport 50,000 MT of Indian wheat to Afghanistan through the land route that passes through the Attari-Wagah border. The gigantic exercise involving thousands of trucks is expected to roll out early February. India and Pakistan had been engaged in finalising the modalities for transporting wheat to drought-stricken Afghanistan for almost 2 months. The government is learnt to have conveyed to Pakistan that it will be ready to despatch the first consignment by the second week of next month. The Taliban have not just welcomed India's proposal to ship wheat to Afghanistan via Pakistan at this "critical time".

Comments. India's offer of delivering wheat to Afghanistan through the border with Pakistan though, despite unceasing hostility in ties with Islamabad, is still the most significant initiative in its outreach to the Taliban who returned in August last year to take control of the strategically important country. Pakistan has rarely, if ever, allowed transit facilities for Indian aid to Afghanistan in the past several decades and in 2002 had rejected the same proposal by India when Afghanistan was faced with a similar humanitarian crisis. India wanted humanitarian assistance to be provided in an unimpeded, direct and assured manner to Afghanistan.

Cash Strapped Pakistan Raises \$1 Billion Through Islamic Bond at Record Interest to Keep Forex Reserves Afloat

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/cash-strapped-pakistan-raises-1-billion-through-islamic-bond-at-record-interest-to-keep-forex-reserves-afloat/article38324001.ece>

Pakistan has raised a whopping \$1 billion loan through the 7-year tenor asset-backed Sukuk bond at a record 7.95% interest rate, the highest cost that the cash-strapped country has agreed to pay in its history on an Islamic bond, and has also agreed to pledge a portion of the Lahore-Islamabad Motorway in return for the much-needed loan.

Comments. The rate is almost half percent higher than even the 10-year Eurobond that the Pakistan government had floated in April last year. The key difference between the Islamic Sukuk and traditional Eurobond is that the Islamic bond is backed by an asset that attracts less interest rate. However, the government has paid the interest rate on an asset-backed bond, which is higher than the traditional tenor bond. Pakistan has agreed to pledge a portion of the Lahore-Islamabad Motorway (M2) in return for the loan, a national asset built in the 1990s that is now used to raise debt from the international capital markets. In the fiscal year 2017, Pakistan had borrowed \$1 billion for five years through Sukuk at a 5.625% interest rate, which at that time was 5% higher than the benchmark five-year U.S. paper. It is the highest rate that Pakistan has ever paid in its history on an Islamic bond, which indicates the desperation of the country that has long been building its official foreign exchange reserves by taking expensive foreign loans. Compared with short-term expensive commercial borrowing, long-term bonds are considered the preferred choice of instruments due to their longer maturity and no conditions attached.

Pak NSA Meets Taliban Officials in Kabul

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/pak-nsa-meets-taliban-officials-in-kabul/articleshow/89215618.cms>

Pakistani National Security Adviser (NSA) Moeed Yusuf held talks with Taliban officials in Kabul and discussed various topics, including the formation of a joint working committee for the economic growth of the two nations. The Islamic Emirate held talks over different issues such as politics, trade, the economy, transit and the extension of bilateral relations. The Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan, Mansoor Ahmad Khan, called the negotiations between Moeed and Muttaqi "constructive". Afghanistan's transit routes with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan have been opened and Afghanistan expect Pakistan to provide facilities for our traders. On his part, Yusuf reiterated the Pakistan government's commitment to provide further facilities for the movement of Torkham and Chaman. Both sides agreed to establish a National Level Coordination Mechanism for enhancing facilitation at Border Crossing Points. They also agreed to initiate barter trade, modalities for which will be worked out immediately.

Comments. There were reports earlier that the NSA would discuss about the recent tensions surrounding the Durand Line, the de-facto border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan. But there was no official confirmation on this. Pakistan and Afghanistan seem to recognize that the dynamics of their relationship has changed, and the world is already starting to see a recalibration on both sides. We will keep monitoring for future implications.

10 Pakistani Soldiers Killed as Terrorists Attack Checkpost in Balochistan Province

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/10-pakistani-soldiers-killed-terrorists-attack-checkpost-kech-balochistan-1905513-2022-01-28>

Ten Pakistani soldiers were killed when terrorists attacked a security forces' checkpost in Kech district of the restive southwestern Balochistan province. During intense exchange of fire, 10 soldiers were killed, it said, adding that one terrorist was killed and several others injured in the incident. The Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) insurgent group claimed responsibility for the attack. Gen Bajwa vowed that sacrifices of those killed would not go in vain and "complete peace will return to Pakistan".

Comments. Baloch insurgent groups have previously carried out several attacks targeting China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in the region. Ethnic Baloch guerrillas have been fighting the government for decades for a separate state, saying Pakistan's central government unfairly exploit the rich gas and mineral resources of Balochistan province, which shares borders with Afghanistan and Iran. They also attack Chinese projects, and occasionally kill Chinese workers. Pakistan has also accused India of covertly supporting the insurgents.

ISIS 'Weapons Training Camp' Uncovered in Pakistan

<https://www.samaa.tv/news/2022/01/isis-weapons-training-camp-uncovered-in-pakistan/>

Abdul Ghani aka Abu Mansoor, a suspected Daish (ISIS) figure, has claimed that the training camp was located at 'Pari-Jal' in Bolan, a district of Balochistan. The suspected terrorist was arrested from Karachi during an operation conducted by the Counter-Terrorism Department or CTD. He claimed where he was trained to use pistols and Kalashnikovs in a 14-day session in 2020. He said he even saw an anti-craft gun there too. In October 2021, at least 15 suspected Daesh terrorists were killed during two intelligence-based operations conducted by CTD Balochistan.

Comments. Pakistan claims to accord the highest priority to the fight against terrorism. Pakistan needs to take tangible action against the terror infrastructure operating from its soil, which will be a good step for the South Asia region. We will keep monitoring for future implications.

Pakistan PM to Visit China to Reinforce Strategic Ties, likely to Seek More Loans

<https://reportertimes.mavalmitra.com/index.php/2022/01/29/pakistan-pm-to-visit-china-to-reinforce-strategic-ties-likely-to-seek-more-loans/>

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan is set to visit China next month to reinforce their strategic ties and to advance economic and trade relations between the two countries. This China visit, which is taking place after nearly two years, will provide an opportunity for both sides to have a look at the state of bilateral cooperation and discuss more projects. "The visit will reinforce the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between our two countries, and further advance the objective of building a closer China-Pakistan

Community with a shared future in the new era. Imran Khan will visit China from February 3 to February 5 during which he will attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics and meet Chinese leaders. Imran Khan is expected to be used to seek a US \$10 billion loan from China.

Comments. The Pakistan PM would try to leverage his trip to seek funding for improvement in social sectors and industrial development to show his achievements back home, before the upcoming elections in the country. Pakistan economy is currently facing a severe financial crisis. Pakistani people are losing faith in the ruling PTI government due to inflation, depreciation of its currency and dwindling foreign exchange reserves. Moreover, the PTI is also facing a credibility crisis as Chinese assistance in CPEC is not bringing the economic and social transformation in the country as it was projected.

China Supplies Mounted Howitzers to Pak to Maintain Arms Parity With India

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/china-supplies-mounted-howitzers-to-pak-to-maintain-arms-parity-with-india-101643261396285.html>

In a move that ensures that Pakistan continues to remain locked up in confrontation with India, Islamabad has received first batch of Chinese manufactured vehicle mounted howitzers to counter the Indian K-9 Vajra howitzers. Beijing is also supplying NORINCO AR-1 300 mm multi barrel rocket launchers to Rawalpindi so that the Pakistan Army has a reply to Indian rocket launchers. The total contract worth is around USD 512 million. Pakistan in 2019 signed a contract with Chinese arms major NORINCO to supply 236 SH-15 155 mm vehicle mounted howitzers apart from AR-1 heavy rocket launchers. In addition to artillery, the contract also includes supply and technology transfer for various ammunition including extended range artillery shells and guided artillery shells with the range of 53 kilometers. Clearly, this supply is to boost the firepower of Pakistan army all along the western border, specially to heat up the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir in case the existing ceasefire breaks down or to send a message on Kashmir.

Comments. The supply of conventional weapon systems, fighter aircraft, destroyers and even the inclination to give DF-17 hypersonic missile to counter India's latest acquisition, the S-400 air defence system, are all part of Beijing long strategy to keep Rawalpindi GHQ in a state of permanent confrontation with India. This strategy has paid dividends to Beijing regime in the past as forces India to remain alert on its western border with a power that boxes much above its weight category due to heavy lift from China, be it in international foray or in military or nuclear parity. Keeping Pakistan under its wing for strategic purposes and reach to Arabian Sea, China has not only supplied arms to Rawalpindi but has played a spoiler to India's entry into Nuclear Suppliers Group. It routinely sides with Pakistan in the UN over Kashmir and vetoes any attempt to list known pan-Islamic jihadi groups or their leaders as terrorists by the UNSC.

China to Help Pak Build Space Centre, Launch more Satellites

<https://www.rediff.com/news/report/china-to-help-pak-build-space-centre-launch-more-satellites/20220128.htm>

China announced plans to boost space cooperation with Pakistan, including the development of a space centre and launching of more satellites for its all-weather ally. China will give priority to developing communications satellites for Pakistan and to cooperating on the construction of the Pakistan Space Centre, the white paper said.

Comments. In 2018, China had helped Pakistan to launch two satellites - Pakistan's first optical remote sensing satellite PRSS-1, and a smaller observation craft PakTES-1A. In 2019, the two countries signed an agreement on space exploration, marking a new phase in space science cooperation between the close allies. China has provided satellite carrying or launching services for many countries like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Argentina, Brazil, Canada and Luxembourg. China has conducted space product and technology cooperation with countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Argentina, Pakistan, and Nigeria.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh Keen to Work With India to Realise Shared Vision of Building Peaceful and Prosperous Region: PM Hasina

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/bangladesh-keen-to-work-with-india-to-realise-shared-vision-of-building-peaceful-and-prosperous-region-pm-hasina/articleshow/89136014.cms>

Bangladesh is keen to work with India towards realising the shared vision of building a peaceful and prosperous region, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Hasina said the year 2021 was a “historic one” for the Bangladesh-India relationship, marked by celebrations of “epochal” events and engagements at the highest levels. Hasina said the unique ties of close friendship, cooperation and trust between the two countries have flourished and grown from strength to strength in recent years. Many new frontiers of cooperation alongside all traditional areas have been identified, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, she said.

Comments. Modi's visit to Dhaka was aimed at join the celebrations of the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence, the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 50 years of establishment of diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and India. Modi's presence on these occasions had added extra enthusiasm to the celebrations and allowed them to further consolidate our excellent bilateral relations, which so happily exist between our two countries. The joint celebration of 'Moitri Dibosh' is held on December 6, when India recognised Bangladesh as a sovereign and independent country in 1971.

SRI LANKA

Colombo Port City: A New Dubai or a Chinese Enclave?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59993386>

Next to Colombo's leafy business district, the huge expanse of sand reclaimed from the sea is being transformed into a high-tech city which will host an offshore international financial centre, residential areas and a marina - prompting comparisons with Dubai, Monaco or Hong Kong. In order to reclaim the 665 acres (2.6 sq km) of new land, the country needed the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) to invest \$1.4bn. In return, the firm has been given 43% of it on a 99-year lease. Officials estimate it will take about 25 years to complete the project. Sri Lanka says the land under its control and the area given to the Chinese will be leased to multinational firms, banks and other companies. The government may also charge a levy on their revenue.

Comments. Sri Lanka is going through an unprecedented economic crisis. The Covid pandemic has devastated its lucrative tourism sector and dented overseas employment, sending foreign exchange reserves plummeting. The country's external debts have surged

to more than \$45bn and it owes around \$8bn to China alone. Hambantota port is not in Sri Lanka's control, it has been given to Chinese control, to pay off the debt to Chinese firms. With China increasingly assertive on the global stage, there are also concerns over its long-term strategic ambitions. The growing Chinese footprint in Sri Lanka is a worry for India. Port City aims to lure away multinational firms and investors already based in India, which could dent investments and job opportunities there.

Sri Lanka and Turkey Renew Commitment to Boost Ties with Fresh Moves.

<https://www.ft.lk/news/Sri-Lanka-and-Turkey-renew-commitment-to-boost-ties-with-fresh-moves/56-729913>

In a significant move aimed at expanding cross-border trade and investment, the two Ministers signed an Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA) during the visit. Foreign Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris underscored the “warm, cordial and mutually supportive partnership” existing between Sri Lanka and Turkey at a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu. Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu highlighted the importance placed by Turkey in its bilateral relations with Sri Lanka “as a friend, ally and valued partner”. Highlighting the importance of economic cooperation, they identified the need to further diversify trade and work steadily towards the achievement of the \$ 500 million per annum trade volume target, as identified at the second session of the Sri Lanka-Turkey Joint Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (JCETC) held in June 2021.

Comments. We will keep monitoring for future implications.

MYANMAR

Aung San Suu Kyi to Face New Trial for Electoral Fraud

<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/myanmars-aung-san-suu-kyi-to-face-new-trial-for-electoral-fraud-report-2739830>

Myanmar's junta has charged Aung San Suu Kyi with influencing election officials during 2020 polls. She will face a further trial on charges of influencing the country's election commission during the 2020 polls that saw her party defeat a military-aligned rival. The case will be wrapped up within six months, the source added. Junta has said that noisy protests or sharing "propaganda" against the military could be charged with high treason or under the anti-terrorism law.

Comments. The junta cancelled the results of the 2020 election on the basis of 11.3 million instances of fraud. Independent monitors said the polls were largely free and fair. Junta has promised to hold election by August 2023, once the fighting between the military and anti-coup fighters is over. Very few expect the military to keep its word. Suu Kyi has already been sentenced to six years in jail for illegally importing and owning walkie talkies, incitement against the military and breaking Covid-19 rules.

Voices of People in Myanmar must be 'Heard and Amplified', says UN Chief

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/voices-of-people-in-myanmar-must-be-heard-and-amplified-un-122013100070_1.html

As Myanmar nears the first anniversary of the military coup that saw the arrest of national icon Aung San Suu Kyi and her civilian government dissolved, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday that he stands in "solidarity with the people", and for a

return to an inclusive, democratic society. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the multiple crises which have resulted due an intensification of violence, human rights violations, rising poverty and indifference to worsening humanitarian conditions by the military regime. The multiple vulnerabilities of all people across Myanmar and its regional implications require an urgent response.

Comments. The Burmese military overthrew the democratically elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint on February 1 last year, announcing a state of emergency. Armed clashes have grown in frequency and intensity throughout the country, while persecution against ethnic and religious minorities has grown, including against the Rohingya. UN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) needs to address this issue. India has to do a tightrope walk between promoting democracy in Myanmar and its strategic and security interests in that country. As a major democracy, India does not wish to be seen to be siding with a military dictatorship. Yet as an immediate neighbour sharing a 1,643-kilometers border across its sensitive northeastern states, India cannot cut the ties with Myanmar. In the past, the Myanmar army had helped Indian security forces in breaking up camps of northeastern militant outfits.

MALDIVES

Turkey and Maldives to Establish Joint Economic Committee

<https://www.anews.com.tr/economy/2022/01/30/turkey-and-maldives-to-establish-joint-economic-committee>

Turkey and the Maldives have agreed to establish a joint economic committee, the Turkish foreign minister said. In an official visit to the archipelagic nation, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu that this committee would help deepens the two countries' economic cooperation and increases their bilateral trade volume. Çavuşoğlu underlined that the two countries' bilateral trade volume had doubled last year, adding that one of the agreements signed during his visit was on trade and economic cooperation. The countries aim to increase their trade volume to \$100 million over the next two years, he said, emphasizing that interest in the Maldives is rising among Turkish business circles and investors.

Comments. Turkey and the Maldives are supporting each other in multilateral relations, as well as in bilateral ties, including within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Maldives-Turkey relations have been expanded with Turkey's support, especially for socio-economic development. We will keep monitoring for future implications.

IRAN & AFGHANISTAN

IRAN

Iran – Russia Meet

(What next for Iran and Russia ties after Raisi-Putin meeting? | Vladimir Putin News | Al Jazeera n.d.)

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin met in person on 19 Jan 22 during the Iranian President's two day visit to Russia. This is the first visit of Iranian President to Russia since 2017. Both countries expressed their support for boosting bilateral ties and discussed regional and international issues during the meeting. Iran and Russia discussed cooperation on combating terrorism and organized crime and discussed towards working together in Afghanistan. Both the countries have worked together in Syria where they backed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The talks also discussed Russian support in the ongoing talks regarding re-instatement of JCPOA and

also Iranian support to Russian – NATO standoff in Ukraine.

Comments. Iran, Russia and China are cooperating to counter US dominance on a variety of issues. Russia currently is following policy of being friendly to all countries in West Asia. It is also measuring actions taken and hence remained non committal towards sale of arms like S-400 and Su- 35 to Iran, notwithstanding Iran's inability to purchase these arms due to financial constraints. For Iran however, Russia remains crucial in case JCPOA talks have to succeed and as also in case the talks fail.

Iran To Get Voting Rights Re –instated at UN

(Iran regains UN assembly voting rights after assets unfrozen | Business Standard News n.d.)

Iran was able to impress upon South Korea to make payment of USD 18 Million to UN for obtaining voting rights in UN. South Korean banks hold approx USD 7 Billion of Iran which have been frozen as a repercussion of JCPOA fallout in 2018. Iran has maintained that its financial condition was not healthy enough due to crippling sanctions imposed by US and also asked South Korea to release the balance funds. Iran had regained voting rights in Jun 21 but had defaulted on payment during the current month. UNGA sad that the voting rights would be re-instated as they have received the payment which was a part of UN operating funds.

Comments. Iranian economy has suffered due to the US imposed sanctions. South Korea said the payment was made after consulting with the United States Treasury -- a potential signal of flexibility amid floundering nuclear negotiations over the US rejoining the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran. Getting voting rights in UN are crucial for Iran as it can be viewed as a status symbol for the countries. With Iran out only two out of 193 UN members Venezuela and Papua New Guinea are without voting rights. It also assists Iran in engaging with other countries in the world at a level platform.

AFGHANISTAN

India and 5 Central Asian Countries to Set up a Joint Working Group for Afghanistan

(India, Central Asian Leaders Discuss Aid to Afghanistan – The Diplomat n.d.)

India and five central Asian countries on 27 Jan 22 decided to set up a joint working group for providing aid to Afghanistan to tackle the humanitarian crisis and the issue of recognition of the Taliban. During a virtual meet of PM Modi with leaders of 5 Central Asian countries, there was a broad consensus on the issues related to Afghanistan, which includes the formation of a “truly representative and inclusive government”, combating extremist groups and drug trafficking and preserving the rights of women, children and national ethnic groups and minorities.

Comments. India and China are competing for influence in the region. Chinese President Xi Jinping on 25 Jan 22 chaired a similar virtual summit with the same leaders. India wants to maintain its influence in Afghanistan and improve ties with Iran. China and India would compete for space in these countries.

Taliban – Western Nation Talks in Oslo

(taliban: At Oslo talks: West stresses on need to resolve humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan - Times of India n.d.)

A Taliban delegation led by acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and Western government officials from United States, France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway and the European Union met for a three day talks at Oslo in a closed door discussion which started on 24 Jan 22. Taliban was intimated that humanitarian aid to Afghanistan will be tied to an improvement in human rights.

Comments. The western nations are truly concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and in particular the women rights. They are however also very cautious about Taliban governance and the realistic threat of Afghanistan being absorbed by outdated and draconian Sharia law. Taliban on the other hand realize very well that they are dependent on aid for even the basic commodities including food and medical supplies. There is likelihood of Taliban accepting some demand of western nations in the short run. The longer run of Afghanistan is still very speculative with possibility of a civil war in case Taliban is unable to garner a system of generation of finances. Taliban however would be pleased just by the engagement and talks as it is likely to view such events as a step towards legitimizing their government.

ASEAN

China Counters India's Brahmos Deal, Donates Military Aid to Philippines Worth \$20 Million

<https://newsable.asianetnews.com/india-defence/china-counters-india-s-brahmos-deal-donates-military-aid-to-philippines-worth-20-million-r62e8l>

China has delivered \$ 20 Million worth of defence equipment as aid to Philippines. Philippines' Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzna informed that the donation was part of a pledge by his Chinese counterpart Gen Wei Fenghe during the Chinese official's visit to Manila in 2020. The defence equipment donated on 16 January by China includes rescue and relief equipment, drone systems, detectors, water purification vehicles, ambulances, firetrucks, X-ray machines, transport vehicles, EOD robots, bomb disposal suits, engineering equipment, dump trucks, forklifts, and earthmovers. The second batch of military items is expected to follow soon.

There are also unconfirmed reports of China planning to give two operational submarines to Thailand.

<https://www.shephardmedia.com/news/naval-warfare/china-to-give-second-hand-submarines-to-thailand/?s=08>

Comments. China has been quick to counter India's sales of the Brahmos by providing a tranche of defence equipment that had been promised to Philippines in 2020. Although the equipment being provided is very rudimentary, Philippines, like most nations in Asia, is not averse to gaining from the Indo-China rivalry and seeking China's indulgence through direct investment and development assistance.

China Lets In Most of the Australian Coal Stranded at Its Ports

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-24/china-lets-in-most-of-the-australian-coal-stranded-at-its-ports>

Chinese customs recently allowed in 6.2 million tons of Australian coking coal for its steel industry and another 5.5 million tons of thermal coal for the country's power plants over the last quarter of 2021. The Chinese government had halted Australian imports near the end of 2020, as political ties with Canberra soured. This has been seen as a one-time

measure to overcome the shortages faced by the industry and the power crisis during the autumn season and there is no clarity on new shipments.

Comments. China-Australia political relations continue to be cold. However, the trade between the two nations has increased steadily to the highest ever of US\$261 billion. Meanwhile, China's coal import from the U.S. has grown by almost 10 times to account for almost 20% of the total Chinese coal imports and those from Canada have almost doubled over the last year.

China's Choice of Ambassador to New Zealand Indicates Focus on Deepening Economic Ties

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/14/chinas-choice-of-ambassador-to-new-zealand-indicates-focus-on-deepening-economic-ties>

China's new ambassador to New Zealand, Wang Xiaolong, has previously served as director-general of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's department of international economic affairs, where he helped oversee the country's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This has prompted speculation that Beijing is planning to focus on deepening economic ties with New Zealand.

Comments. China-New Zealand political relations have been under pressure over the last couple of years, with New Zealand govt making conscious efforts to diversify its economic interests and diplomatic relations away from China. Its government has also been vocal against China's human rights violations in Xinjiang and have repeatedly voiced concerns on China's actions in the South China Sea.

Wang is known as a potential peace-maker figure in the otherwise crop of "wolf warrior" diplomats. His posting is thus being seen as a step towards improving political and economic relationship with New Zealand and reinvigorating its interest in BRI. Last year, the New Zealand government had indicated a willingness to work with China on "mutually beneficial" BRI projects with an environmental emphasis, although no specifics had been defined.

China Willing to Advance China-New Zealand Military Relations: Defence Spokesperson

<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/20220127/fe2a559e5cb440bd9d833a58bd2bf470/c.html>

China and New Zealand carried out a high-level military talk via video link on 19 January – General Li Zuocheng, chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department with Andrew Bridgman, Secretary of Defence and Chief Executive of the Ministry of Defence of New Zealand. During the talk, 2022 was marked as the 50th anniversary of China-New Zealand diplomatic relations. As per the Chinese military spokesperson, the talk involved exchange of views on regional security situation, bilateral state and military relations, as well as other issues of common concerns.

Comments. New Zealand's Defence Assessment, launched in December 2021, has indicated a leaning towards U.S. for its national security requirements and China does not find mention among its Asian '*protection companions*.' While this was a normal bilateral meeting, when coupled with the statements issued by the Chinese government and media on the appointment of the new ambassador, it could be seen as part of fresh overtures to New Zealand, which has had a more conciliatory approach to China in the past, owing to dependencies on trade and economics.

EURASIA

India – Central Asian Republics (CARs): Summit Meeting

<http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/34773/Delhi+Declaration+of+the+1st+India+Central+Asia+Summit>

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian Republics (CARs), a summit meeting was held, virtually, on 27 January 2022. Indian Prime Minister and Presidents of the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan attended the meeting. Apart from the India – Central Asia Dialogue mechanism at Foreign Ministers level, they agreed that the Ministers of Trade and Culture would also meet at regular intervals to take the cooperation forward. They also agreed to continue regular meetings of Secretaries of the respective Security Councils to discuss security developments in the region. The Central Asian Leaders welcomed the offer of India to establish an 'India – Central Asia Centre' in New Delhi which would act as the Secretariat for the India – Central Asia Summits. The Leaders welcomed the proposal to create an 'India-Central Asia Parliamentary Forum' for a better cooperation among the legislatures of the respective countries.

Comments. India and the CARs have centuries-old close civilizational, cultural, trade and people-to-people linkages which are required to be nurtured for building a long term, comprehensive, and enduring partnership based on mutual trust, understanding and friendship. India lacks surface connectivity with the CARs and had earlier termed its policy "Connect Central Asia" as a guiding principle of diplomacy in this region. The CARs have remained under the shadow of Russia for their security needs. CSTO meets most of their security requirements. China's big infrastructure development programme, BRI, in the region has established major interdependency among one another. China ALSO held a similar China plus CARs summit meeting only two days prior to India's meeting and commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of establishment of China-CARs diplomatic relations. India on the other hand has depended upon the cooperation areas which could be progressed in spite of the geographical connectivity issues.

India and the Central Asian member countries of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as well as the Ashgabat Agreement on International Transport and Transit Corridor called upon the other Central Asian countries to consider joining these connectivity initiatives. **The CARs supported India's proposal to include the Chabahar Port within the framework of INSTC.** They agreed that connectivity initiatives should be based on the principles of transparency, broad participation, local priorities, financial sustainability and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. The Central Asian countries welcomed the proposal of India to establish a Joint Working Group on Chabahar Port to address issues of free movements of goods and services between India and Central Asian countries.

Major issues discussed also pertained to the Afghanistan situation emphasising the implementation of the UN mandated guidelines and also addressing the humanitarian concerns arising out of the Taliban takeover. Terrorism and measures needed jointly to check its spread in the region were also discussed in detail as its spread from Afghanistan's dispensation directly affects all countries of the region. CARs acknowledged that defence cooperation constitutes an important pillar between India and concerned Central Asian countries. **The Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan expressed satisfaction over regular bilateral military counter-terrorism exercises with India.** The Leaders condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reiterated that providing support, using terrorist proxies for cross-

border terrorism, terror financing, arms and drugs trafficking, dissemination of a radical ideology, goes against the basic principles of humanity and international relations. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of UNSC Resolution 2593 (2021) which unequivocally demands that Afghan territory not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing terrorist acts and called for concerted action against all terrorist groups, including those sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of extensive vaccination, vaccine supply, transfer of technology, development of local production capacities, promotion of supply chains for medical products, and ensuring price transparency were also discussed. **The CARs appreciated the approach, 'One Earth One Health' presented by the Indian PM, emphasizing that the post-pandemic world requires diversified global supply chains that are based on trust, resilience and reliability.**

Prime Minister of India outlined his oft quoted principle of 'Support of All, Development for All, Trust of All, Efforts of All' for regional development, peace and prosperity, which was well received by the CARs leaders.

The Leaders welcomed the signing of MoUs for implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) for socio-economic development in CARs, based on grant assistance by India. They noted the ongoing discussions with regard to utilization of USD 1 bn Line of Credit announced by India in 2020 for infrastructure development projects in Central Asian countries.

The Leaders of Central Asian countries praised the role of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme and the scholarships offered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in human resource development of their countries. They also welcomed India's proposal to organize customized professional training programmes for diplomats from the CARs at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in New Delhi. The Indian side offered to provide more training slots and scholarships including customized training programmes to meet the requirements of CARs.

The leaders stressed on the importance of making concerted efforts to boost trade and investment in sectors like medicine, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, education, information technology, Business Process Outsourcing, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, space industry, textiles, footwear industry, gems and jewellery. They welcomed the development of direct contacts between the States of India and the Regions of Central Asian countries, including through establishment of partnership arrangements between them. They also welcomed the proposal for establishment of an 'IT/ITES Task Force' between the IT organizations, IT parks and IT companies of India and the CARs. The CARs invited the Indian film industry to explore and use the picturesque countryside locations in their countries for film shootings. **The Central Asian Leaders acknowledged the interest of Indian educational institutions to set up campuses in their countries. In this regard, the setting up of campuses by Sharda, Amity and Sambhram Universities in Uzbekistan was specifically highlighted by the President of Uzbekistan. President of Turkmenistan stressed on the importance of TAPI gas pipeline project.**

The Central Asian Leaders took note of Indian initiative of 'One Sun One World One Grid' that aims at fostering inter-connected solar energy infrastructure at global scale. The Indian side highlighted the role of 'International Solar Alliance (ISA)' initiative in collective, rapid and massive deployment of solar energy for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Indian side also underlined the role of 'Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)' in promoting disaster resilient infrastructure for reducing

economic losses and improving the well-being of communities in the face of calamities. India looked forward to CARs joining the ISA and CDRI.

The Leaders of Central Asian countries reiterated support for permanent membership of India in the reformed UN Security Council. They appreciated the initiatives undertaken during India's August 2021 Presidency of UNSC and welcomed the ongoing tenure of India in the UNSC. **The Leaders agreed to hold the next meeting of the India-Central Asia Summit in 2024.**